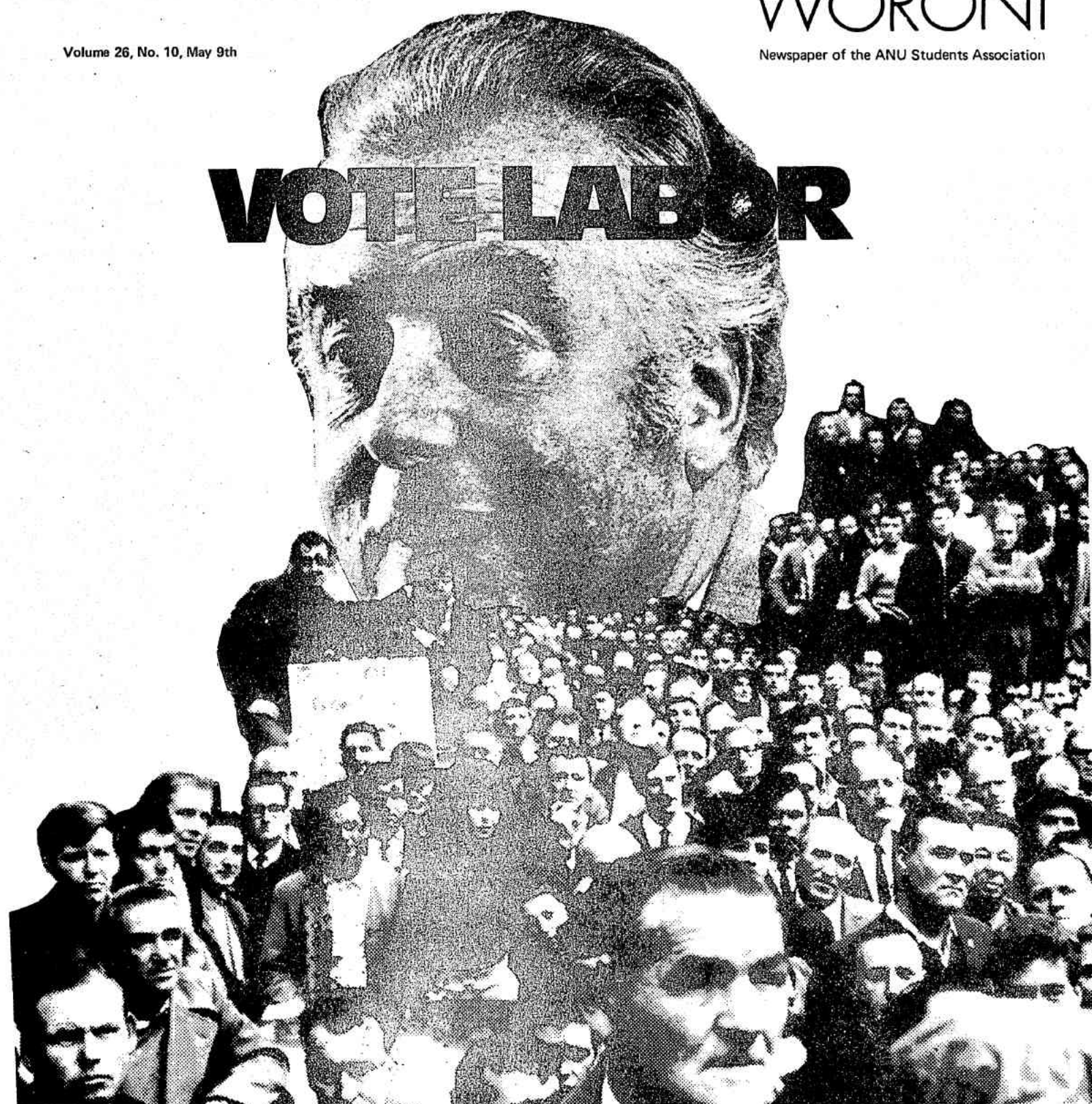


VOTE LABOR



EDITORIAL

If the students (and—let's give them credit—the staff) of this university were allotted the task of deciding which party should govern Australia for the next three years, there is no doubt that the Australian Labor Party would be returned with an increased majority in the House of Representatives and a controlling share of the Senate.

The reasons are fairly obvious. Firstly, most students would have some knowledge of the social problems facing the people of this country, and would have become aware of the many positive steps taken by the Whitlam government to alleviate these problems. There are, indeed, many students who would rightly say that the government hasn't gone nearly far enough on abortion, women's rights, homosexual rights, aboriginal land rights, national health, and in many other areas, the government has been unwilling to fight the conservatism that stands in the way of social reforms. But these same students who criticise the government for its slackness are also aware that there is no

possibility of advancement in these areas under the parties of big business, the Liberal-Country Party coalition.

The attitude of students towards the forthcoming elections will be affected by the matters with which they are concerned, and probably the most significant aspect of Labor policy in this regard has been the abolition of tertiary education fees and the establishment of the tertiary allowance scheme. Although this policy has many shortcomings, it is clear that nothing of this sort would exist under the Liberals, who have never pretended to favour the provision of equal opportunities for all who want to attend tertiary institutions.

But students would not be altogether correct if they viewed the elections solely on the basis of the issues that affect them most directly. For it is the issues that students are all too prone to ignore that should dictate the necessity of the return of a Labor government.

The essential point to consider is the basis upon which the policies of each party are determined. In the context of

the parliamentary system in Australia, we cannot assume that Labor's policies are honourable merely because they are presented by honourable members. In fact the reverse is more often true — the extent to which the policies of the ALP may be considered "honourable" is determined by the amount of control exerted upon the parliamentary sector by the party's social base.

The same is true for the conservative parties, except that the social base of these parties lacks any historical validity, and should have no place in the running of this country. On the other hand, the social base of the ALP is the largest single force in Australian society, and the only social force capable of demanding and implementing meaningful social change, whether they be reforms of a strictly limited nature, or the complete socialist transformation of this society.

The Australian working-class — which, through its organisation into trade unions, provides the Australian Labor party with its power while fighting to protect itself from the worst excesses of the Whitlam

leadership's pandering to the capitalist class — made a significant step forward when its political party gained power in 1972. Large sections of the capitalist class have been quick to grasp the significance of this step, as is evidenced by the current mad scramble to unseat Labor before it has a chance to implement even the mildest of reforms. This is not merely because the conservatives fear reforms, but also because within these reforms instituted by an often reluctant Labor leadership lie the potential for greater reforms, reforms that even Whitlam and his clever cohorts may not be able to withstand.

This is why a vote for Labor in the coming elections is a necessity. Labor in power is the prerequisite of a challenge to the capitalist system. What happens after this — and how far it goes — depends on the ability of the working class to press the leadership of the party into far-reaching reforms, and to dispense with any "leaders" who would attempt to dissuade the working class from carrying through its historic task of the socialist transformation of society.

LETTERS

PICKING NOSES

Dear Sir,
A lot hangs on this election. I would urge each voter to consider carefully the following questions before they vote.

1. Which party's policies will benefit the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in Australian Society — migrants, Aborigines, old people, young mothers, people in rented accommodation and other low income earners? Which party's policies will enrich the already rich?

2. Which party is likely to be most responsive to the needs and wishes of all people affected by their decisions, not just the interests of a few?

3. Which party is trying hardest to increase and improve Australia's aid to developing countries and is prepared to seriously look at our trade and investment policies towards them?

I am one of several Canberra Christians who have considered these questions. We believe that while the new Liberal-Country Party policies are an improvement on their old ones, in the crucial area they are often vague or silent. Their reproach remains a superficial one — one of easing problems rather than attempting to tackle their causes.

Under a Labor Government these questions are being seriously tackled. Progress has been made in many areas — Aborigines, women, pensioners, education, trade policy and overseas aid.

We believe that it would be a major setback in these areas if Labor was to lose office.

This Sunday we will be handing out leaflets outside churches urging Christians to make social justice the basis of their vote. We will also state our own conviction that those concerned with social justice have no choice but to vote for the return of a Labor government.

Ann Pickering.



PICKING PACKER

Dear Sir,
Last week's *Woroni* included one essay which represented a complete incomprehension of concrete analysis of the role and function of the university in Australian society today. Subsequently I find this more widespread than the reactionary status orientated right wing spreading in fact into the very heart of the university. It seems that the attitude 'developed' in 'the Face At The Bottom of The Well' stems from a position of basic ignorance but with a desire to express oneself and come to a position suitable for oneself. It requires some effort to knock the examination campaign in terms of the status quo as this

requires no verification other than that it exists — a very dangerous euphoria when it produces the childish blindness of last week. I damn well hope that, that which follows is not the jibberings or fun writings of the blind.

Mr/Ms Packer (for the writer is completely unknown to *Woroni* and the Students' Association) first picks out a group on campus which he attaches the label 'Enlightened Minds'. A petty trick for indeed all contributors to *Woroni* and all students who hold any opinions have pretension to Enlightenment of one form or another, it would seem that here we have an individual claiming to be Super-Enlightened!

Perhaps this Packer needed us to resolve to abolish exams for him to serve his role, so he, it would seem does not hesitate to ascribe to us any history that would suit his purpose. In fact we at no point isolated any necessary or sufficient cause of alienation nor did we set ourselves the task of abolishing exams. Obviously there is no necessary or sufficient cause that we can change, social reality is just not that simple Packer Sir. Alienation, it is true does exist but a lot more consideration will be needed before any causes can be developed, for they will be found to be very complex and part of some interacting whole (society) from which it will be impossible to isolate them. We must simply concern ourselves with justified reforms within whatever structure we are intimate with and we can open. As part of our reasoning we have said that we do not believe in the abolition of exams. Our objection centres around the single final mindblast at the end of the year. If Packer had been in the Mills Room he/she would have seen a prominent poster setting out twenty alternatives to end of year exams. These included other exams as some of the alternatives. In several subjects the course dictates an examination type assessment (e.g. Pure and Applied Maths) but in many, many others this is not so, all they require is a form of assessment, something which we do not object to for most members of staff accept this distinction. Packer could well do to become aware of a few basic facts before he sets off on some polemic again.

The article continues — University is Hell enough for the ignorant — why should we fail them!! Oh! Dear! Packer, you don't know what you are talking about, where do you get these 'ignorants' from which deserve extinction? Perhaps they just fool everybody by turning ignorant after adolescence? And how do they bribe their way past the School and Higher School Certificates through Matriculation? What do they keep creeping in all the time to dirty up your (bourgeoisie if you like) idea of Merit? For that is the innuendo. I would not be so rash as to in any way assert that people fail university because they are ignorant and, once again we have never said so.

Packer next befuddles himself over representing us as claiming this system is an affront to social progress. Absolute rubbish! The system is designed to enhance social progress. The university today is being transformed to provide the skills to accelerate promote and suitably control social progress.

So Packer, if something has to give way it will not be society for quite some time, it ever. It will in the first instance be only a changing direction of the role of the University within our society. The University cannot continue enhancing social progress by taking on such roles as the training of accountants as this is causing deep grumblings within the Technical Colleges and Colleges of Advanced Education who functionally are meant to be offering degree course in subjects such as Business Studies, Medical Technology, Forestry and Accountancy etc.

How can anyone be satisfied with a university economics faculty that is so tied up with society as to exclude Marxist Economics? What sort of university are we asked to be proud of is it that evangelizes religious philosophy denying materialism? ANU is so tied up with social progress that people have stated that they will not consider changes to courses if the changes are inconsistent with society. We want a university that is not so orientated, one which recognizes as valid the role other tertiary institutions play in the more vocational fields which can serve society as much as they like.

I've no argument about that provided that it removes the heavy handed bias from ANU.

Still bumbling around he carries on. We are next lumbered with the idea that the student must be guaranteed a pass at the end of the year. A questionable line if it allows students to just sign up for a course and do no more. When an institution deliberately picks off the top ten percent of matriculations I find it very hard to believe that fifty percent fail because they don't match up to any sort of useful criteria. The tool to pass or fail a student is being misunderstood and misused and it is always the ones that do succeed who we find looking back or down at others crying ignorance! Mediocre! The proper paths for recognition have been all too well marked out and firmly trodden in by the eager opportunists such as Packer.

I honestly doubt whether I could ever agree with the bulk of pre-existing scholarship which is bandied about the Faculty of Arts and coincidentally in the (I'll say it) bourgeoisie Press. There does not happen to be courses in Marxist Philosophy or Marxist Sociology when by definition of a university, ANU should be the very place you would expect to find such courses. How the hell were we supposed to be seeking the lowest common denominator? Jesus Christ this fellow Packer takes on a few liberties.

A University exists in the first place at a high denominator common or not,



and it will always be so. Why Packer is so frightened of what he chooses to denounce as ignorant, mediocre or low I just don't know. This character is so affected he sees scheming shadows in direct sunlight, study will never become secondary particularly if it is not expected to prepare people for some particular role later on.

It would seem that in a sense imagination is restricted, but only through the restriction of experience to the 'agreed' on role and direction of ANU. Packer picks this up but presents it to the reader as grandiose posturing which we would never attempt and indeed it appears only Packer would be capable of.

Packer has very scant regard for the consolidating effect of suitable opinions that simple, unadorned facts can have.

You only have to talk to a person who has spent time in a Catholic School to know that. How would you go in a Catholic school espousing that facts? Why the same as you would have gone in America last century — explaining evolution or Negro equality and further, the same as you would go in the Faculty of Economics with a Socialist body of facts. An exam has no means to even allow such facts at all whereas essays do. And so Packer Sir it becomes apparent that while facts and study are terribly important the assessment encouragement and development of following facts is even more important, implying that the only thing the University should take upon itself is to judge the ability to formulate correctly new facts, provided that everybody within the University is free to choose their own initial start or if you like, direction and subsequent role.

To be continued,
Chris Warren.

PACKER PICKED

Dear Editors,

It was rather astounding to read Jim Packer's article in the last *Woroni*. As bourgeois apology for the status quo it was an example par excellence.

Jim's charge against those whom he nominates, "the philanthropists" (much to the chagrin of most of them, I imagine) i.e. that they are "committed...to a superficial iconoclasm and an imaginary threshold, over which all must pass in order to achieve some glorious affirmation of existence" could just as well, and with rather more truth, be laid at the door of those who support a system of assessment in which the Examination is the holy of holies. Isn't the fail/pass/credit/distinction/high distinction farce "an imaginary threshold over which all must pass"? "Imaginary", of course, not in the sense of the very real anguish it affords many of those who must cross it, but "imaginary" in that the standards it purports to represent are arbitrary things emanating from the minds of various academics at different times and under differing circumstances (cf. Phil O'Connor's article in previous *Woroni*).

Several unwarranted assumptions appear to be the premises upon which Jim's argument relies. First there is the classic fallacy that the present system (by which, it seems fairly obvious, he means examinations) "discriminates on the basis of merit". This delusion can only be sustained by adherence to the equation merit=examination technique/performance. Similarly, the assertion that "the Examination System... tests knowledge" and in fact is the "system which alone tests knowledge of the facts", (my emphasis) can only be considered as having any validity if a three-hour regurgitation of what appeared to be the examinable parts of a year or semester course can be called by the word "knowledge". This, of course, hardly seems to be the case.

It is also puzzling to wonder where Jim got his ideas on what this education campaign is about. He seems to think that "wider choice of means of assessment" is the same as the guarantee of "a Pass at the end of the year". For purely pragmatic reasons this could not be the case, and in fact the ANUSA Education Committee has not recommended that pass/fail distinction be done away with. As for the statement "it is empty mindedness that anti-examination techniques both advocate and encourage" little more is needed to demolish this theory than the experience of just about

MORE LETTERS

any student: do you feel more empty-minded when cramming for an exam than when researching for an essay, etc, in which you happen to be interested?

As for "encouragement... (being) given to the Mediocre" - by whose standards are some condemned to mediocrity?

What "our servile Marxists" advocate is not "anti-intellectualism" (in its true sense) but anti-elitism - opposition to elitism of the kind that can make the incredible assertion "everybody knows that the children of the Bourgeoisie are most likely more intelligent than those of the Proletarians".

The crux of the matter, though Jim somehow fails to realise it, is his sentence "study, however, exists for its own sake, and resists subordination." Study should be assessed from its products, which are in turn means of study, and not by something anew to the whole point of study, i.e. the three-hour examination.

Yours etc,
J. Funke,
Arts II.



NIT PICKING

Sir,

I refer to the recent 'debate' on examinations, and 'student participation' in general.

It is laughable that the so-called 'anti-alienationists' should show themselves in their true colours. They have not hesitated to 'alienate' others from their convictions when it suited them. By making the issue one between 'Authenticity' and 'bourgeois Self-interestedness' they pass over the real issue - but not only this, they are totally impervious to their own inconsistencies. If we have to discuss issues on their ground - 'authenticity' (inalienability of convictions) we should note their own activities. For one thing they have mishandled and distorted the real objections to their beliefs, and have done likewise to the convictions of their opponents (one minor instance of this being the 'title' that appeared over my recent article in this very democratic, student-oriented newspaper (possibly editorial comment?!)) - the intention? Why, in this age of existential issues - to alienate a person from his convictions by placing a stigma upon them!

But apparently 'inconsistency' does not matter to people who are undertaking the radical restructuring of society so that bourgeois (!) ethical standards that are cornerstone of the new society! They are not interested in 'integrity' because they are not interested in truth. They are more interested in cliché.

I hasten to add that those who are genuinely interested in democracy will also be genuine when it comes to facing facts. And one fact is that socialism should be kept out of assessment procedures, where it has no place. If a university is interested in objectivity, then the only

form of 'alienation' that is permissible is alienation from the truth, and since truth is objective, 'alienation' is an alienating doctrine.

J. Packer.

PICKED LIKE THE PROVERBIAL PIMPLE

I was prompted to write this letter last night as I sat, drunk, on the floor of a college room, and in an argumentative mood, having just been subjected to a mud-slinging exercise between a cartoonist and a public servant.

Come with me on a tour of the three entertainment areas of our Union "... the community centre of the University (which) provides a common meeting ground and amenities for students and staff in their daily life on campus." (1974 Faculty Handbook, p.35).

This, fellow students, is our club. We pay about \$20 a year to belong to it - that makes it dearer than the Queanbeyan Leagues Club and most other Canberra Clubs (and I know which I'd rather belong to.)

Well, let's start on our tour with a visit to the milkbar which (to quote once again from the 1974 Faculty Handbook) along with the refectory is "... for the informal, budget-conscious eaters". What a load of garbage. And that's what you may well be served. Here in the comfort of a tantalizing blue, orange and white decor you can sip chunderous coffee (if you are game) or a cup of tea (which is pretty safe, since not even the Union can go wrong with a tea bag, or can they?) You can also select a hot snack from an enormous range - pies, sausage rolls or pasties. For those with a sweet tooth, there is an "extensive" range of sweets - only to be surpassed by the range at the Yarralumla Fish Shop and every other Greek or Italian run snack bar in Canberra.

Which all leads me to suggest that this snack bar, along with the refectory, should be given over to private enterprise (the way it is done in some Canberra clubs: the snack bar sells food at lower prices, subsidised by the club). A couple of Greeks could do wonders for the milkbar - maybe "Greasy Louis" which is about to lose its site in Lonsdale Street may be moved onto campus.

Seriously though why shouldn't our club's snack bar serve an extensive range of hot foods (fish, chips, chiko rolls, scollups etc) at all hours? I've no doubt that if it was run by private enterprise we'd receive much better food (which wouldn't be hard), better service and better hours.

But let us not linger too long in the milkbar, in case we catch something, let's move along to the spacious refectory (as you can see I'm saving the most exciting part till last). Here, collected on one long warming tray you can view a bigger array of garbage than can be seen at Piallago tip. Daily, students pluck up the courage to walk the gauntlet beginning at the 'Oliver Twist' moving past the 'Maccaroni cheese' and 'spagetti bolognaise' (Is that what it is?) and ending with the peas and gravy. And, believe it or not, all prices are below those charged at the 'Lobby'.

Why shouldn't the refectory's food be as good as Woolies or a government cafeteria? Why shouldn't the range be as extensive? and why should the prices be higher?

This is not an attack on any individual on the Union staff - but opposition to an administrative set up which does not cater for student interests and is inefficient. Again, I say, bring in private enterprise, which would not be able to absorb in-

efficiency and will be concerned whether students are satisfied with the food and whether they'll come back (at this point I would like to say that my support for private enterprise carries no political connotations).

Having completed the tour of the Refectory we now climb those stairs to the exciting Union bar. Here you are not welcomed by a doorman, as is the practice in clubs with lower membership fees (but, really, a doorman would only be another wage to pay and this would probably force a rise in our low, low price. Once in the door, you have the honour of viewing the greatest ballsup on the University campus. I believe that any student who had any part in this architectural plan has betrayed his fellow students. Here, at the well appointed bar (if it had been placed anywhere else, it would have been functionable) your club's friendly staff welcomes you, usually with a barrage of abuse - and tells you, in not too polite terms, to leave at closing time. Yes this is our exclusive \$20 a year club, opening up its heart to its members.



Why was the bar placed where it is? Why not have a circular bar like in the Scottish at the Rex? Could you really fit all students into one bar? And what about that dance floor! Why don't any of the windows open - yet theres no air-conditioning?

The inadequacy of the setup is displayed regularly every Friday and Saturday night - delays of up to 15 mins to get a single drink because the bar is overcrowded and only one tap is operating. You get better and friendlier service at the Lakeside - and you don't even have to pay to be a member. Is this a club serving its members best interests? Why not pull the bar down and start again - or move back into the good old Union.

In brief, my recommendations for improving our club so that students may get a better deal are: Introduce private enterprise into the milkbar and refectory areas - hopefully this will lead to a better range of food, better food, and better trading hours including late night and all weekend; Demolishing the bar in its present state and replacing it with two or three bars (each with a different emphasis e.g. dances, quiet drink area etc) - perhaps moving the games room and utilizing the functions room could give up a better deal; and finally, a change of attitude of staff would boost the Union greatly - they should realize that this is a club and they are there to serve our interests.

I'm shed off with the Union and like most other students I support it because of its convenience (like I'd use a toilet!) I believe this is one club that my social scene can do without.

Isn't this appalling situation more real to students than international affairs?

Chris Morrissey.

ACT NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

At the moment it seems that the election campaign of the Liberal and Country parties has succeeded in convincing (bluffing) the Australian voter. The response from Labor supporters to the Labor cause has been too complacent, and with the election less than two weeks away, the prospect according to opinions polls of a Labor victory appears grim. A 1.3 per cent swing will be enough to defeat the government. One reason for the lack of action by Labor is the shortage of campaign finance. Labor does not have access to the money channel from multi-national companies and the oil empires. As a result, in New South Wales for example, Labor's total media advertising budget will be only \$120,000, yet the Liberal's budget for three Sydney radio stations alone is \$180,000. The need then for outside support is obvious. The undersigned have begun to organise a collection from students and staff of the Australian National University and the Canberra College of Advanced Education. We hope the movement will grow quickly.

The money collected will be spent on Labor advertising in key electorates in Sydney and Melbourne, because the election will be won or lost in these seats, not in Canberra.

Early in 1973 a prominent Australian wrote of the Labor victory as 'the end of the ice age'. After 23 years in office, a Liberal Country Party government had turned Australia into a Conservative backwater. Today in May 1974 there is a prospect that we may once again return to the 'ice age'. If Australia is to have any future as a nation, if we are to be able to live with ourselves, it is imperative that we show what sort of new Australia we want: an Australia based not on greed but on community; an Australia based on concern for the poor, the sick, the aged and the homeless; not on concern for the speculator and the businessman; an Australia owned by Australians, not one in the hands of foreign companies.

These new hopes centre around Labor's actions and frustrated intentions in education, urban affairs, health, ownership and control of our own resources, in concern for aborigines, the environment, and for Australian culture. A Liberal Government would reduce and in some areas abandon spending on urban problems (public transport, western suburbs improvement programs, land acquisition etc.); it would restore grants to the wealthy private schools; it would allow private profit to again dominate urban development, mineral exploration and health care.

ACT NOW BEFORE ITS TOO LATE

Money or cheques (made payable to *Australians for Labor*) may be sent to our President, Leonie Sandercock, Urban Research Unit, RSSS, ANU (in H.C. Coombs building, ext. 4455) or any Committee Member. We have an ANU Commonwealth Bank Savinas account No. S126)

AUSTRALIANS FOR LABOR

Suggested Donations.

Undergraduates - \$2.00 or more
Postgraduates & Staff \$10 to \$20 or more

Donations can also be left with:
Stuart Firth, Pacific History, RSPaCS.
Mike Towsey, Economics.
Karen Walker, Zoology
Stephen Alomes, History SGS
Elizabeth Lewis, Education Research Unit
Andrew Dunstan, Bruce,
Elizabeth Spearritt, CAE (first year)
Philly Hartley, Dip Ed. CAE

Latest total to Wednesday is approx.
\$1,000.00

FROM VICTORY TO GREATER VICTORY!

THE BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU

Dien Bien Phu: like vampires before a crucifix, the military brains of the West and the gaggle of priests, bankers and scribblers who provide the basic philosophical mumbo-jumbo of imperialism recoil and quake before that name. They have had other defeats and setbacks in their five-century orgy of looting and killing around the world, but they know that Dien Bien Phu has a special meaning: three Oriental monosyllables tolling the end of their order, in a way it had never been heard before.

The occasional defeat of a regular Western army by the "lesser breeds" can be readily explained away, and even made to serve the purposes of imperialism, by the usual references to "savage Hordes", "contempt for human life", "suicide squads", "screaming human waves" etc. on one side, and to "tiny, gallant bands", "noble sacrifice" and so on on the other, with evocations of Thermopylae, Rorke's Drift and the Little Big Horn. But the facts of Dien Bien Phu do not fit the imperialist clichés, nor can they be explained away. The truth is that a Vietnamese schoolteacher, Vo Nguyen Giap, with no military education other than that gained in the field, and that other one, more subtle and perhaps more important, bequeathed to him by his country's thousand-year Odyssey of resistance, matched his strategic wits with the flower of the Western military tradition, the graduates of Saint-Cyr and West Point, and in the end the cunning net he wove strangled them like helpless babies.

From the winter of 1950 onward, the initiative in the colonial war in Indochina had been steadily slipping from the grasp of the French Expeditionary Corps. Within a short period, the People's Army of Viet Nam had grown from practically nothing to a tough and well-disciplined force of regular, regional and guerrilla troops. Most of the villages in the densely-populated Red River Delta had been liberated from French or puppet control by 1953, and the French found that the bulk of their forces, including their formidable paratroops and legionnaires, were tied down in a multitude of tiny forts and blockhouses, where they were subjected to continual slow attrition from guerrilla attack. The new Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Corps, General Navarre, could see that the situation was getting beyond the capacity of France to control; what was needed was a further massive infusion of American financial and military aid. But the Americans were not willing to continue pouring money down a seemingly bottomless drain, as they had been doing since 1950, unless there was some clear result in view. What this meant in effect was that they demanded a much greater say in the formulation of the French strategy, so that they might keep an eye on their investment. It also brought that other familiar American institution, the "Eighteen-Month Plan to End the War" — in this case, the so-called "Navarre Plan".

This was an adaptation of an earlier French plan developed by General de Lattre de Tassigny. Briefly, it consisted in assembling the best of the French forces into powerful, fast-moving "Mobile Groups" to engage and destroy the regular Vietnamese forces, with the former static positions of the French being occupied by a vastly-expanded puppet army, entirely financed and equipped by the United States. The task of the French mobile forces would be to draw Giap's regular troops away from the delta by invading their strategic rear

area in the North-West, forcing them to engage in exhausting and unequal combat in difficult terrain. The French would then make use of their airborne mobility at the end of the campaign season in the North to switch their attack to the liberated areas in the South, where better conditions would prevail, and in this way they hoped to build up a momentum of success which would lead to their ultimate victory, or, at the very least, a favourable negotiating position.

In the autumn of 1953 the French mobile forces launched a series of brutal search-and-destroy operations in the Delta region as the first step in their new campaign, using many of the crack troops formerly garrisoned in the North-West. But Giap was one jump ahead of them. His forces carried out a successful spoiling operation in the Delta without large reinforcements, while preparations were made to attack the now-exposed French positions in the North-West. The French, alarmed, occupied by parachute the strategic valley of Dien Bien Phu which commands the approaches to Laos. The only other large French base remaining in the North-West, at Lai Chau, was taken by the PAVN forces on December 12, 1953. The fleeing garrison of French led puppet forces was practically annihilated as it made for the safety of Dien Bien Phu.

The French and Americans were now seriously worried about Dien Bien Phu itself. It was too late to withdraw, so they decided to reinforce the base heavily with elite units of the Paratroops, the Foreign Legion, tanks and heavy artillery, all brought in by transport aircraft from Hanoi, 187 miles away. Navarre thought he now had the chance to lure the Vietnamese forces into a classic set-piece battle whose outcome would be decided by a vast French superiority in fire power and re-supply capacity. Dien Bien Phu was to be the graveyard of the Vietnamese revolution.

All through January and February, twelve battalions of French and colonial troops toiled to make Dien Bien Phu into an impregnable fortress. They built eight strongpoints based around an airstrip, with flanking positions guarding the northern and southern approaches to the valley. Powerful batteries of 105 and 155 mm artillery could blast any part of the valley or the surrounding hills. Wide fields of fire were cleared around all the strongpoints, which were defended by deep belts of barbed wire. Ten American M.24 Chaffee tanks stood ready to spearhead paratroop forays into hostile territory, and six fighter-bombers loaded with bombs and napalm waited in their pits beside the airstrip. The installation of a large number of superheavy 120mm mortars, powerful searchlights, American .50-cal. machine guns in quadruple armoured mounts and extensive minefields in all directions completed the preparation of what both the French and their American advisers insisted was an utterly secure position. A continuous procession of top military and civilian brass from France and the United States including the American Army Commander in the Pacific, General O'Daniel, flew into Dien Bien Phu on tours of inspection. During this period, and without exception they sent back highly optimistic reports on the likely outcome of the coming battle. Significantly, the visitors included a high-level delegation of American anti-aircraft expert fresh from the war in Korea, whose opinion was that hostile flak could not seriously impede the flow of airborne supplies into the base.

Meanwhile, back in the jungle, the Vietnamese high command was by now



several jumps ahead.

Giap had set about dismantling the Navarre Plan almost before it had started. A series of well-timed offensive thrusts in Central and Southern Viet Nam took the pressure off the Red River Delta in late December by forcing Navarre once more to disperse his powerful mobile groups, the core of the whole scheme. And having taken the decision to meet them head-on at Dien Bien Phu, the Vietnamese were busily transforming the "impregnable fortress" into a deadly trap for the unsuspecting French. Using all their skill in engineering and camouflage, and unaided by machinery, they secretly built a new road from their base areas at Lang Son and Cao Bang in the North-East, through the liberated zones of Thai-Nguyen and Tuyen-Quang to Yen Bay. From Yen Bay the road was driven to meet the old Colonial Route 41 at Son La. From Son La to the Dien Bien Phu advance base at Tuan Giao the road had to be cut through a wilderness of mountains, swamps and jungle in convolutions that covered hundreds of kilometres, every metre of which had to be carefully hidden from prowling French aircraft. Often the work could proceed only at night, under the most atrocious conditions imaginable. Torrential downpours would wipe out weeks of backbreaking effort in a few hours. As the road approached Dien Bien Phu, swarms of aircraft bombed and strafed everything that moved, and French-led irregular units made continual forays aimed at cutting the road. But all these efforts failed, the road got through, and the French were in big trouble.

They were, of course, quite unaware of what was about to hit them. With all the confident cockiness displayed by the Americans ten years later, they dropped many thousands of leaflets over the hills around the base, challenging the Vietnamese to come out and fight. They were unaware that at that moment the Viet-

namese were wrestling their 105s into superbly camouflaged positions on the slopes of those very same hills, directly overlooking the fortress. The French had imagined that their 155s and fighter aircraft inside Dien Bien Phu would force the Vietnamese to locate what guns they had on the reverse slope of the hills, well out of range.

They got their rude awakening on March 13, 1954. Before they had recovered from the thunderous artillery barrage which descended on their positions, the French defenders of strongpoints "Beatrice" and "Gabrielle" were hit by the furious assault of two regiments of the famous 308th "Iron Division" of the People's Army. The simultaneous fire of concealed flak guns and pin-point counterbattery fire smothered the French air and artillery support. After two days of murderous combat the red flag was flying over both shattered hilltops, and the French were offered a truce to come and collect their piles of dead and wounded.

With the fall of these two fortresses, the fate of Dien Bien Phu was sealed. The airstrip was now exposed to deadly and constant shelling which effectively closed it by 26 March. Morale within the camp plummeted as the French realized what they were about to receive: on 17 March the desertion of two entire puppet battalions rendered a third position untenable, and it was abandoned.

The trouble was that Giap was not playing the game according to the imperialist rules. Instead of making massive frontal assaults on the French positions, he had adopted a strategy which aimed at preserving his manpower resources at all costs. Now that the French were well and truly trapped, and the supply problem had been overcome, a "no-risk" approach was the logical choice. In fact, the tables had been completely turned. Now it was the French who were starved of supplies — everything had to be drop-

ped in by parachute, including more than five battalions of reinforcements.

The powerful French artillery batteries failed utterly in their task of knocking out the Vietnamese guns — indeed, they themselves were knocked out with brutal efficiency. And the Vietnamese effectively neutralised the defensive firepower of their enemies by the use of their secret weapon — the shovel. If any troops should be called "Diggers", then it is they, not the Australians, who deserve the label. They literally strangled Dien Bien Phu's fortresses with a spider's web of trenches, over 500 kilometres in all, surrounding each position and creeping closer and closer, sometimes burrowing right under the barbed wire and into the strongpoint itself. The result was that the losses suffered by the Vietnamese forces were much lighter than those inflicted on the attacking troops in similar examples of positional warfare, as on the Western Front in 1917.

All through April the battle continued in this way, with the French perimeter gradually closing in. Frantic efforts were made to parachute supplies to them, but the constantly shrinking drop zone was under accurate fire most of the time, as were the transport aircraft, and up to half of the tonnage dropped fell into Vietnamese hands. The fighting during this period was extremely close, violent and bloody as the French launched many desperate counter-attacks with the fury of cornered rats. Nor was it surprising that they should: the Vietnamese People's Army, having fought both French and American imperialists, found the French to be incomparably the better soldiers at all levels, and the French paratroops, of whom seven battalions were consumed by Dien Bien Phu, have a fearsome reputation indeed. But at Dien Bien Phu, and in the other battles of that last campaign of 1954-54, the French found that the army opposing them included the

best infantry divisions in the world, brilliantly led, utterly fearless and totally committed to victory.

By the end of April, all that the surviving members of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu were fighting for was the slim chance of breaking out of the trap and escaping into Laos. (Little did they know of the secret diplomatic moves then under way to involve American air power on a massive scale in the battle — moves which found their most enthusiastic supporters in the French High Command, the US State Department and the Australian Government, but which were vetoed by Anthony Eden, to his eternal credit). Torrential rains had turned the battlefield into a sticky morass, churned and raked by shellfire and strewn with rotting corpses and smashed equipment. The canopies of many thousands of supply parachutes lay like fallen petals over Dien Bien Phu and the surrounding hills. Then, on May 2, the People's Army launched the final assault on the headquarters position an area of little more than a square kilometre into which were crammed more than ten thousand defenders. The perimeter was breached, and despite their savage counter-attacks the French never succeeded in closing it again.

But for the commander of Dien Bien Phu, General Christian Marie Ferdinand de la Croix de Castries, arrogance was such a habit that when five wiry brown men with tommy-guns burst into his command bunker and demanded his surrender, he haughtily demanded to know their rank, as he would yield "only to an equal". Of course, his absurd pretension failed to impress the Vietnamese, who took him prisoner nevertheless, but it is a sad comment on both of them that both de Castries and France herself maintained that pretention until a tommy-gun had to be cocked and stuck into their ribs, twenty years ago on May 7, 1954.

FROM VICTORY TO GREATER VICTORY: From Geneva 1954 to Paris 1973.

The August Revolution of 1945 opened a new chapter in Vietnamese history. Under the Declaration of Independence by President Ho Chi Minh, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was founded, putting an end to the long night of French domination. The French colonialists attempted to reimpose their rule by sending a military expeditionary force to Vietnam, hoping to crush the national liberation movement. Their dreams were shattered 9 years later when French troops met with a humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu (7 May 1954). This victory of the Vietnamese people led to the signing of the Geneva Agreements in July 1954. The national rights of the Vietnamese people — independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity — were solemnly recognized.

The Agreements stipulated that the opposing military forces be separated by a provisional demarcation line at the 17th parallel. The units of the Vietnam People's Army were regrouped north of that line, and the troops of the French Union south of it. This was meant only as a temporary division of the country into two zones for the purpose of ending the shooting war. The two zones were to be reunified through free and democratic general elections to be held within two years. The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference stressed the fact that the cease-fire line was purely a provisional military demarcation line, and by no means constituted a political or territorial boundary.

The Vietnamese people rejoiced: the nine long and hard years of the Resistance, culminating in the victory of Dien Bien Phu, had brought a negotiated settlement. The northern half of the country was liberated, French troops were withdrawing from the southern zone, and the country would be reunified within two years. But the rejoicings were short-lived as US imperialism was determined to thwart the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people and to cheat them of the result of their hard won struggle.

The United States began their involvement in 1950 on the side of colonialism by giving military aid to the French expeditionary force. Towards the end of the war, this aid amounted to 80% of French military expenditure. During the 1954 Geneva Conference, the US attitude was of total dissociation and non-cooperation with any negotiated settlement with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. After the signing of the Agreements, US imperialism stepped directly into Vietnam to replace the moribund French colonialism. The puppet administration — composed of the most reactionary elements of Vietnamese society — created by the French in the South found a new master. Ngo Dinh Diem, picked by the Americans to head this administration, refused to carry out the general elections for reunification stipulated by the Agreements and set up a separatist southern state under his dictatorial and corrupt regime, with the full support of the United States.

This negation of the national rights of the Vietnamese people, and the exploit-

ation and oppression of the Southern population by the US-backed Saigon regime caused the people to rise up and fight for the liberation of the South. Under the leadership of the National Liberation Front (NLF), formed in 1960, and of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG, 1969), the Vietnamese people in the South successfully resisted all US schemes to enslave them. Frustrated in the South, the US widened the war to the North. But, despite its overwhelming military power, despite the most savage and demonic weapons devised by its technology, the US has suffered a defeat in Vietnam. The US had unleashed a most bestial and destructive violence on the people, the social fabric and the land of Vietnam without being able to impose its will. The Vietnamese people, making a superhuman effort and an immense sacrifice, has victoriously resisted the US and has forced it to sign the Paris Agreement of January 1973.

The Paris Agreement represents a major victory of the Vietnamese people. The US had to pledge "to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam", and to end its military involvement and intervention in the internal affairs of South Vietnam. It had to undertake to respect the "sacred, inalienable" right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people who "shall decide themselves their political future through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision".

It is true that the Agreement does not represent a total victory. Next to the liberated areas, zones controlled by Saigon still exist. The PRG, sole legitimate representative of the people of the south, will have to coexist with the Saigon regime for a time. The US is still giving aid to Saigon, and that aid is the sole reason why that regime still manages to survive. But this is only a temporary situation. Unlike what happened after Geneva 1954, when the US relieve France in Vietnam, this time there is no other power to relieve the US. And the US is short of strategy. Its military solution has failed. The Paris Agreement indicates that the struggle in South Vietnam has become primarily economic and political. And it was precisely because the US-Saigon regime had failed in the economic and political field, that the US was obliged to have recourse to military means.

Saigon is faced with extremely serious economic difficulties. The aspiration for peace and freedom among the population under its control is so strong that, despite its police-state system, opposition to the Saigon regime is mounting. This struggle for peace, for the strict implementation of the Paris Agreement has the whole-hearted support of the people in the liberated areas. Driven into a corner, Nguyen Van Thieu is again resorting to military means, but that had been tried on a much larger scale by the US without success. The powerful and victorious People's Liberation Armed Forces constitute a very strong deterrent.

Reluctant as they are, the US and Saigon have no other choice but to implement the Paris Agreement which will lead, slowly perhaps but irreversibly, to peace and independence in the South, and to the reunification of Vietnam.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the victory of Dien Bien Phu, there will be an exhibition of pictures and posters on the cultural and social life of Viet Nam in the McDonald Room of the Menzies Library, from May 8th to May 20th.

Harcourt

At a lunch-time meeting in the H.A. Tank on Tuesday Professor Harcourt from Adelaide University re-emphasised criticism in the narrowness of our Economic Major... He pointed out quite clearly that by using the Samuelson equilibrium model with rates of return for capital (that magic immeasurable) and labour you were defining our capitalist system with its gross inequalities in income. It was not possible to talk of major changes in income distribution within this system - the model relies upon and is a justification of the status quo. The concept of marginal products (which deals impressively with infinitely small changes) Harcourt suggested was a clever method of the neo-classical school to direct attention from the status quo with its potentially embarrassing power structure and focus it on mathematical sound manipulations within the status quo. It is not possible to talk of social economics as a subset of the neo-classical school; it removes the possibility of it occurring one may perhaps talk of social concern. One certainly cannot deny the presence of normative judgements in Economics when we are taught a value-laden course with implicate assumptions in the power structure of our society.

Harcourt emphasised that capital theory was not an esoteric little side-light, but is essential to understanding our

economic system. Marx says that the conflict between capital owners and those who rely on their labour for income will inevitably result in revolution. Whether or not you believe in Marx the conflict between property and labour owners, it is real (it is visible in our rate of inflation). The Labor Party's refusal to tackle this problem must be seen as a significant reason for their likely electoral loss.

In an interesting aside Harcourt described poor Goffle-Woffle as a victim of the neo-classical delusion. As a socialist caught in the neo-classical web Gough has become the Milton Friedman of Australia - as perfect competition within the neo-classical framework provides the best deal for the country. Ironically enough businessmen and farmers who one may have superficially thought would benefit from free trade have vigorously laid sufficient shit on the Labor Party to ensure that they lose the election. A more forthright display of the power (obviously greater than the 'free competition' level) of the capitalists could hardly be found. But anyway perhaps Gough will come back with socialist policies next time, perhaps our Ecos. Faculty will discuss the political and social implications of our economic system and suggest alternative economic systems and perhaps pigs will fly.



Woroni is running a competition! Yes, that right all you have to do is to place a cross on Burgess Cameron's lovely photo in the exact spot where you think his brains are. The neatest correct entry wins a free trip to the chancelry in an air conditioned chauffeured sports coupe and a night in the Mills Room with Chuckles Williams! What a wonderful prize, but its not easy to win. Entries without a cross will naturally be considered.

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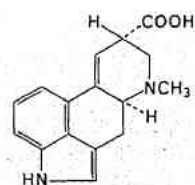
SADIE and NECO
by Max Richards

and

FAIR GO

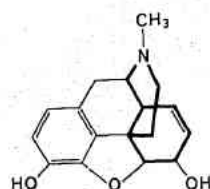
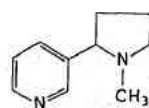
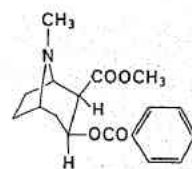
by Roger Pulvers

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Bookings now open at Tuffins, Burchiers'
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National Science Faculty Association

Annual Conference 1974 May 25 to June 1



All science students are urged to attend what promises to be a very interesting conference which includes NSFA's Annual Dinner Dance on Friday May 31 at the ANU Union - 3 course meal, with wine, dance with "Norman Normal" afterwards and (of course) a bar will be open.

Further details about the conference, the dinner and NSFA in general can be obtained from the Conference Director, John Grimau, c/- Students' Association Office.



This issue of Woroni was edited by Martin Attridge. Layout assistance provided by John, Andrew and Rod Webb. Any nasty letters about the front page can be sent to Rod Webb, c/- Arena, Macquarie Uni.

Published by Andrew McCredie who is still silly enough to stand in the firing line for libel and obscenity suits.

Busy Manager is Aunty Jack Grimau who will do much more than rip your arms off it you don't give him more adds (i.e. drinking money).

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JESUS, MORE WOMEN

WOMEN'S STUDIES

This week's meeting on the Women's studies course was concerned mainly with outlining specific content areas in order that we may have a submission before the first meeting of the joint committee of the Board and the Students' Association. The proposals are too detailed to outline here but information about them can be obtained from the Students' Association office. The student representatives of the committee have accepted our request that the presentation of a fully worked-out course be held over at least until after the Seminar on Women in the University to be held at Melbourne University on May 18-19.

Apart from the essential business of making a preliminary programme it was felt that we should take some stand on the motion adopted by the Arts faculty and the establishment of a committee of the arts faculty to report on the implementation of the motion. The general purport of the motion was that the



faculty regard as a desirable objective the extension of Women's studies and that a committee be set up to consider suitable plans for the expansion of women's studies and to discuss these with departments. The committee then established consists of five staff members and one student. It was decided by our committee (which consists of all those who attend our Monday meetings) should register a formal protest against this sort of high-handedness, in the follow-

ing terms: "That the dean of the Arts Faculty be informed that a committee on the women's studies course was established on 29/4/74. This committee was established in accordance with the terms of reference accepted by the Board of the School of General Studies. That there is no suggestion that we are opposed in principle to the widening of courses already in existence. Further that the committee established by the Arts faculty is contrary to the spirit of the other stud-

ent demands in that it consists of 5 staff members and only 1 student in ignorance of the deliberations of our committee".

Further consideration led us to the decision that it may be wise to work with the faculty committee to the extent that we intend to keep them fully informed of the progress of our meetings and to give assistance when invited to do so. Nevertheless we feel that we have neither the time nor the energy to work both for widening of existing courses and the establishment of a Women's Studies Course although we regard both as desirable objectives.

A broadsheet explaining yet again why there should be a Women's Studies Course is being prepared and will be circulated to all members of academic staff and as many students as possible.

Meetings on the course will continue throughout the vacation. The next being on Monday 13 May at 8pm in the Meetings Room.

Liz O'Brien.

From page 8

the green light was given to the sadists, obsessed by sex, any woman who had a pointed chin, a long nose or a bright intelligence, was in danger from Luther's followers, or the Pope's. One wonders what went on in the minds of these women, and of the women who escaped. When a young woman, reared in the belief that the Devil worked through women, discovered that she was attractive to men and attracted by them, she must have been petrified by fear — 'Am I the offspring of the Evil One? Did my mother have dealings with Satan?'

Here we are in the last third of the 20th century. And a lot of questions are still being asked in women's minds, with the residue of all these horrors still remaining in our midst. How can we sort out what is true human behaviour and what is distorted by Christian tradition?

In the Middle Ages it was personal salvation that was sought. Is it still so? In those days people could only know what was going on in their own village, but we can learn every night what has happened during the same day all over the world. We can read in libraries about the great upheavals like the Industrial Revolution, the growth of Western Im-

perialism, the Technological Revolution—all of which have had effects upon individual lives, quite beyond personal control.

Women's Liberation Movement makes us question our attitudes to this society; to question the top-sided morality that has been handed down to us, with its concentration on sexual behaviour to the exclusion of those wider principles of conduct advocated by Jesus, indeed by all humanitarians; the 'Love your enemies' principle, the 'Feed my lambs' and the 'Let the one without sin cast the first stone' principles. These truly are the 'Way, the Truth and the Life'.

We question all the institutions of our society. We ask, do women owe the advance in social standing in the 20th century to the efforts of the Church or have we gained it in spite of religious opposition? Who began prison reform? The organised Church? No, an individual woman. Who began the Birth Control movement? For freedom for women begins in the womb. The Church opposed it and still does. Annie Besant, Charles Bradlaugh, Margaret Sanger, Marie Stopes—these suffered ostracism and arrest for giving information to women which is so vital to them. Bradlaugh was an avowed atheist, so was Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten, who treated little children with respect and was sacked for his irrel-

igion. Margaret MacMillan and her sister Rachel and Madame Montessori allowed children to move about the classroom and make decisions for themselves. The practice and theory of their revolutionary educational methods have spread through all enlightened educational systems, but in the religious Training College I attended, the Montessori Method was denounced—it 'disrupted discipline and introduced anarchy into the classroom!'

I saw last week that the Methodist Church has decided to give women more effective representation in Church decision-making. Maybe it will prove a step in another revolution! It is quite certain that as soon as women began to appear on administrative bodies we began to hear of housing projects, maternity welfare, baby health centres. The Church had had plenty of time to get these initiated before. Are the Christian women of Canberra supporting the Family Planning Clinic which Women's Liberation has founded? Are they working to get the tax taken off contraceptives and for the right of women to control their own fertility?

The hardest job that Women's Liberation has got is in getting women to question everything they think they are sure of, because they've never probed. What do they accept because it is the Christian inheritance?

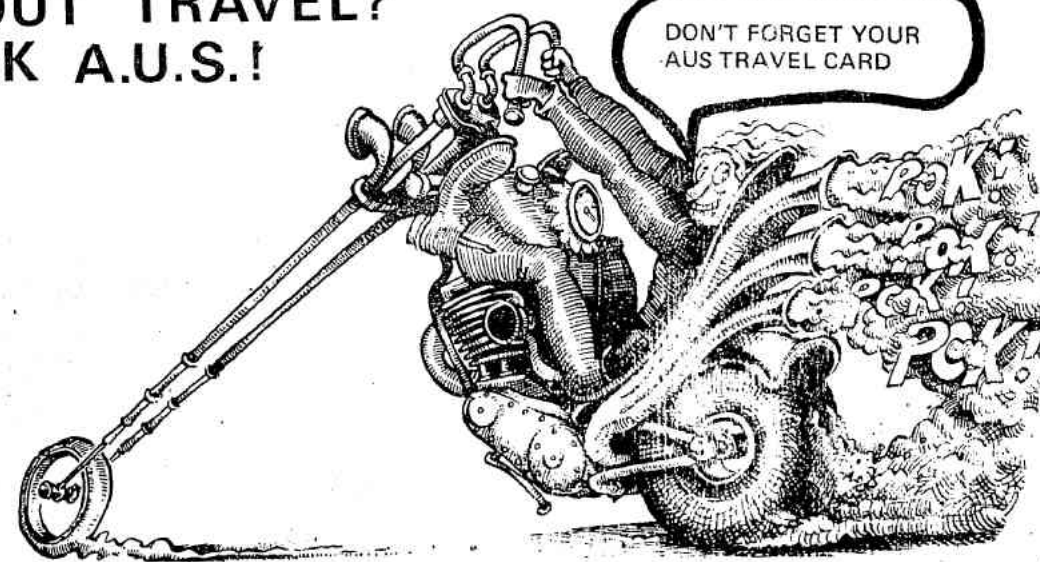
May I suggest a few more questions, for intimate thought? This matter of virginity. Is motherhood then a state of impurity — if the mother of Jesus was pure because she had no experience of sexual intercourse? Are the human body and its appetites a matter of shame? Do you think it is a good arrangement and use of talents for everywoman to be a personal servant to one man and a few children? Do you think that male politicians are the best people to decide whether you should have a child or not? Do you think that Latin words for bodily functions and features are more acceptable than Anglo-Saxon ones? And why? Is it because Latin was the language of the Church and Anglo-Saxons were pagans and their language anathema? Is that the reason for the outburst of frenzy and superstitious fear over the Little Red School Book?

Just one more question to exercise your imagination! Suppose the Gospels had been written by four women instead of four men? Say, Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary, sister of Martha, who liked his conversation; Martha, who got fed up with waiting upon the intellectuals; and Mary Magdalene, who adored him, — maybe for reasons the Gospels don't disclose.

Beryl Henderson.

**THINKING ABOUT TRAVEL?
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a.u.s. travel,
in the
concessions
area
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NOW**



page 7

GOD LOVES WOMEN?

Stop Press: Yesterday 150 students with children occupied Melbourne University Chancery Building in protest at the lack of a Creche on a campus of 1500 students. The chancery is now the Creche.

NEF
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I speak as an Atheist. I have been converted from Christianity to Atheism, which I consider is a 'Higher State'! For several years I was an ardent Church worker. It took years to throw off the mental shackles that Christianity had bound me in and those years were the most exciting of my life. It was wonderful to find a whole world of thought opening before me.

W.L. emphasises the face that women are conditioned by society to play a certain role. The institutions that do this conditioning are permeated by Christianity — it is in our laws, our education system, our very thinking, so I am going to ask you to look at Christian teaching through the eyes of Women's Liberation. When I say The Church, I mean the whole body of Christian thought, not any particular sect. I realise I may say things that might shock you. I can only say that, in the words of Paul 'I speak the truth in love', for it is only by gathering women together as sisters that we can hope to attain to the stature we have been denied.

First let us look at the attitude of Jesus to woman, as shown in the Gospels, if it

When she told him of the difficulty about the wine at the wedding feast in Cana, he said 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' (Jno.ii.4).

Consider these words too, from one who had been brought up to honour father and mother, 'Everyone that hath forsaken houses or brethren or sisters of father or mother or wife or children for my sake shall receive an hundredfold and inherit everlasting life' (Mat. i.29) Offering a bribe for breaking up the family!

Now, we ask, did Jesus also challenge the Scriptures on the status of women? No, he accepted it. Did you notice in that list, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife children — no mention of forsaking husband. Any such thought would be a non-thought, a wife was a non-person. The 'Everyone' mentioned was everyman. Just as in our own accepted thought, until quite recently, 'person' meant 'man'; a married couple are made one and that one is the man.

Jesus did not challenge the 10th commandment 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.' You will remember when he was asked about a woman

was in bed, sick of a fever. And Jesus took her hand and helped her to her feet. The fever left her. Did this group of young men, including Jesus, say, 'Now take it easy for a bit. We'll bring you something to eat?' No, 'she got up and she waited upon them'. Woman as servant. It was the accepted thing.

I quoted Paul a moment ago. He had a lot to say about women.

'It is better to marry than burn' (1 Cor. vii.9). This for men. Get yourself a sexual receptacle and call it a wife (op.cit. vii.1) It is a good thing for a man to have nothing to do with a woman. Women should not address the meeting. They have no licence to speak but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their own husbands at home. It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation (1 Cor.xiv.34, 35).

Wives, be subject to your husbands. (Eph. v.22).

There are many more in this tone and you no doubt know them, each one more insulting than the last. I know he said in his letter to the Galatians that there is

ed Dorcas, or on Mary the sister of Martha. Following Paul, who boasted of his celibacy, which he considered made him superior to married men, the Church has connected women with what it held was the basest attribute of man — his fleshly lust, for which Eve was responsible; and through Eve's causing Adam to sin, Christ died...

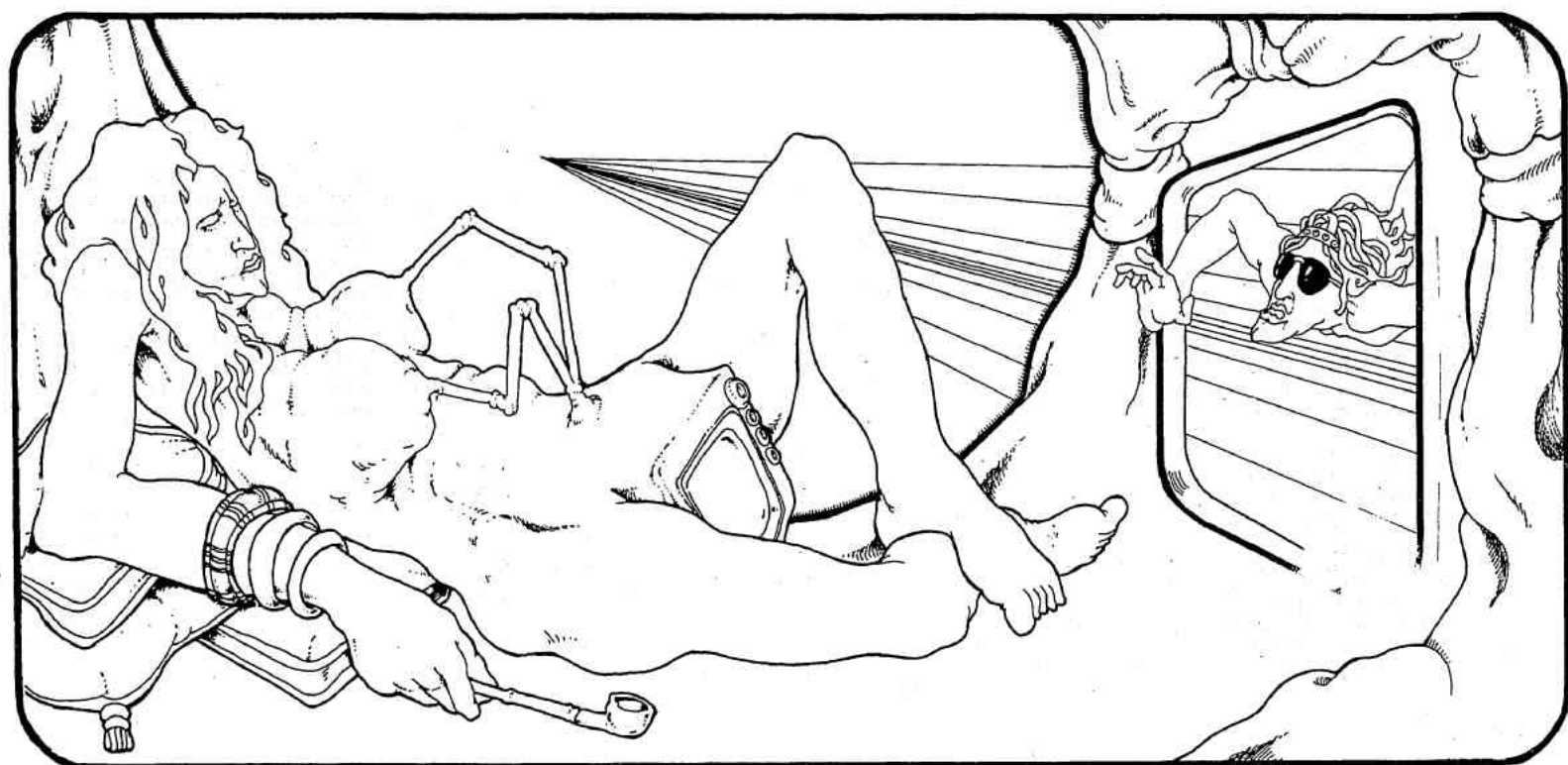
What a burden of guilt to lay upon women. 'But they will be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety's said Paul in a letter to Timothy.

So, sex is sin, and sex is woman, and woman is sin. 'Flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God' (1 Cor. xiv.50). After the resurrection there is no marriage or giving in marriage. Men and women live purely like the angels.

So, chastity is the ideal. (Paul even told the married men to try and live as though they weren't).

But for healthy human beings, chastity is almost impossible, and nowadays, medical and psychological experts tell us that it is undesirable...

But all through the Christian ages there cries the story of the efforts to repress or



is possible to look at this record with a mind uncluttered by sentimentality, ideas of divinity, consciousness of sin, guilt and fear and all the mental confusion that a Christian upbringing implants in us.

Jesus challenged the Scriptures and the accepted thought of his day on several points:—

On behaviour to one's enemies. 'Ye have heard it said 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy' — but I say unto you 'Love your enemies'. (Matt.v.43) On the law of the Sabbath. 'The Sabbath was made of man, not man for the Sabbath'. (Mark.ii.28)

On the savage punishment meted out to adulterers, death by stoning for both parties. 'Let the one who is without sin among you cast the first stone'. (Jno.viii.7) On the commandment 'Honour thy father and thy mother'. He showed such discourtesy to his mother that one can hardly believe it. 'Know ye not that I must be about my father's business.', when she thought he was lost on that dangerous road between Jerusalem and Nazareth. One doesn't rear a boy up to 12 without some justifiable anxiety in such a situation, and Andrew, and Simon's mother-in-law

whose husband had died, and who, according to Jewish law, was handed down from brother to brother — 7 of them — and the question put to Jesus was, 'At the resurrection, whose wife will she be?'. Did Jesus say, 'It is a shocking thing that a woman should be expected to accept the embraces of 7 brothers, one after the other, without a by-your-leave, or any suggestion that she might have had feelings about such an intimate matter?' No, he replied that at the resurrection this property law does not hold; there will be marriage or giving in marriage. Note the 'giving in marriage' — the handing over of a piece of property. We read of it later, when Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians 'I betrothed you to Christ, thinking to present you as a chaste virgin to her true and only husband' (There is a lot of food for thought here.) And we have it in the marriage service 'Who gives away the bride?'

So Jesus accepted the idea of woman as property.

You will remember that he, with James and John, went to the house of Simon and Andrew, and Simon's mother-in-law

neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female, but this was 'In Christ Jesus', whatever this meant—it did not mean in ordinary life. Paul had a hierarchy to announce, and he said it more than once, 'God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman'. There she is at the bottom. The whole weight of his theme is a denial of any sort of independence or human dignity to our sex. Indeed, there is a verse in Lamentations that fits our case. 'Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the people'. (Lam.iii.45).

So, the two who founded the Christian faith had a poor idea of women. And as one reads through the New Testament one finds that most of the references to women are in connection with their specialised bodily function. Women are sex-objects. The mention of Dorcas who could make shirts and Mary the sister of Martha who liked joining in conversation with Jesus, are about the only indications that women are capable of any activities outside the realm of their female condition.

But Church teaching has not been bas-

at least to regulate the sexual urge. The celibate Church Fathers, goaded by their envy and frustration, devised diabolical punishments for acts which should be a source of joy and fulfilment.

They substituted anxiety for joy and sin for love. And women suffered the most from this perversion in the seat of power, for they were deemed the cause of men's falling into sin. No one knows how many innocent women were tortured and burnt to death — some estimate hundreds of thousands, some estimate millions — during the centuries of the witch-hunts. The Protestants were as brutal as the Catholics. Luther married to 'save himself from sin'. It was he who invented the saying 'The woman's place is the home'. He also said, and I quote, 'If they become tired, or even die, that does not matter. Let them die in child-birth — that is why they are there'. (Althaus. Die Ethik of M. Luther. p.100. note B2.).

Jesus deplored the harsh punishments pronounced by the Scriptures, but once

Cont. page 7